DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 038 SO 015 415

AUTHOR Hermanowicz, Henry J.
TITLE Preservice Economic Education: The Environment for Preservice Teacher Education.
PUB DATE Oct 83
NOTE 8p.; Paper prepared for the Joint Council on Economic Education-National Association of Economic Educators Annual Meeting (San Antonio, TX, October 6-8, 1983).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Competence; Competency Based Teacher Education; Curriculum Development; *Economics Education; *Educational Improvement; Educational Policy; *Educational Quality; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Preservice Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Joint Council on Economic Education

ABSTRACT

In the many national studies and reports on improving the quality of formal education in the United States that have been published recently, the importance of quality teaching is emphasized repeatedly. Questions concerning the realization of this goal focus on recruitment, preparation, retention, and reward strategies. However, there is little mention of the importance of preparation in economics, which should be a fundamental component of teacher training. It is critically important that the Joint Council on Economic Education issue a new policy statement defining the role of economics in teacher preparation. Such a policy should state the following: (1) prospective teachers need to complete required formal study in basic economics; (2) economic concepts and knowledge should be made an integral part of general methods courses for elementary school teachers; and (3) a formal course in economics should be required for all secondary level social studies, business, and home economics teachers. In addition, states requiring competency examinations for prospective teachers should include an adequate number of general economic items as well as more complicated questions for social studies, business, and home economics teachers. (LP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Henry J. Hermanowicz
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED240038

PRESERVICE ECONOMIC EDUCATION: THE ENVIRONMENT FOR PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

by
Henry J. Hermanowicz

SO 015 415

Paper prepared for the Joint Council on Economic Education-National Association of Economic Educators Annual Meeting (San Antonio, TX, October 6-8, 1983).

JOINT COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION-NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF ECONOMIC EDUCATORS ANNUAL MEETING

San Antonio, Texas

October 6-8, 1983

PANEL SESSION: PRESERVICE ECONOMIC EDUCATION

Friday, October 7, 11:00-12:00 (Noon), Espada Room

Chairman: Dr. Charles Gallagher

Sub-Theme: The Environment for Preservice Teacher Education

Presented By: Henry J. Hermanowicz, Dean, College of Education,
The Pennsylvania State University

INTRODUCTION

For a variety of reasons, we have experienced during the past few months an incredible array of national studies and commission reports dealing with the necessity of improving the quality of formal education in the United States. At last count, there were over thirty such studies completed or in process. Among the reports that have gained considerable prominence as a result of media exposure were the following:

The National Commission on Excellence in Education Report entitled A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. Two reports from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching--the first one entitled The Condition of Teaching and the second simply called High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America. There is also the much publicized report of John I Goodlad and his associates published in book length form entitled A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future. Other reports include the special committee of the Education Commission of the States dealing with Education and Economic Growth, The Twentieth Century Fund Report, and the National Science Board's Commission on Pre-College Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology. Last Spring, we also had the College Board report entitled, Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need To Know and Be Able To Do.

BODY

Obviously, the genesis of many of the reports is the general concern about lowered measured average achievement of students, with previous declines in SAT scores, with poor comparisons of U. S. student achievement matched against students in other industrial nations, and with secondary school curricula that allegedly "have become homogenized, diluted and diffused without central purpose." Criticisms have focused on the schools failing to cultivate academic literacy and higher cognitive abilities of our students. The curricula of our schools along with erosion of academic standards and a loss of clarity of purpose have been attacked in the reports.

Within this framework, a number of recommendations are emerging to reform our schools. As you well know, the National Commission on Excellence offered recommendations dealing with content, standards, time, teaching, and leadership-fiscal support. The Commission's content recommendations call for strengthening state and high school graduation requirements with minimums for all students in the so-called five new basics which would include: (1) four years of English; (2) three years of mathematics; (3) three years of science; (4) three years of social studies, and, (5) one-half year of computer science with college-bound students also taking two years of foreign language. The recommendations also included adopting more rigorous and measurable standards and higher expectations for academic performance and student conduct in addition to expanding the school day, lengthening the school year, and even providing eleven-month contracts for all teachers.

The Carnegie Foundation study on the American High School also stresses clarifying the educational goals of the high schools, emphasizing the centrality of language-writing skills, and stressing core requirements

in the curriculum which would include five units of language, two and one-half units in history, one unit in civics, two units in science, two units in mathematics, and a half unit each in technology, health, a seminar on work, and a senior independent project.

Without going into the details of such recommendations and the differences that one can find among such reports, a pervasive, significant theme that seems to emerge is the centrality of teachers and quality teaching as fundamental to the success of such recommendations. This, in turn, is generating a great deal of activity and attention on teacher education and the status of the teaching profession. I suspect that all of the southern states are creating plans to upgrade teacher education, the certification of teachers, and the assessment-improvement of teacher performance. Teacher organizations and other professional groups are jumping into the national debate sometimes narrowly focusing upon single dimensions of the issues such as career ladder or merit pay strategies. However, what is being proposed is nothing less than a substantive transformation of our schools, their curricula, and their relationships with our universities along with concomitant transformation of the preparation, licensure, and status of teaching as a profession.

In other words, the issues go to the heart of how we can recruit better qualified people into teacher preparation programs, how we can prepare them better in such programs, how we can retain and reward the most competent teachers, and how we can involve the universities in overhauling the quality of our schools as part of a collaborative enterprise. These issues, I predict, will also be themes in the forthcoming congressional and presidential elections. The cultivation of greater economic literacy is also a fundamental issue in matters of curriculum reform for our schools and in teacher preparation.

However, I take little comfort in the fact that understanding "... the fundamentals of how our economic system works ..." is mentioned within the basics of the "Nation at Risk" report or that economics education is mandated in 27 states. My reading of the Carnegie Foundation report "High School" did not encounter any mention of economics.

Here, I should pause to mention what I see as four broad strategies emerging in view of the issues previously identified:

(1) Merit-based scholarship-fellowship programs along with loans having forgiveness features in order to attract brighter individuals into teacher preparation programs.

(2) Efforts to overhaul and strengthen teacher education with concomitant efforts to raise certification standards.

(3) Experimenting with career ladder and merit pay efforts.

(4) Encouraging greater university/school collaboration to improve the quality of our schools.

In view of such developments, it is critically important for the Joint Council on Economic Education to offer a new policy statement regarding the appropriate role of economics in the preparation of teachers. The working draft of guidelines and recommendations prepared by Stowell Symmes represents a first cut at such a statement. My initial impressions of this working draft are that, in its present form, it is somewhat too complicated and too detailed and probably contains sections that may not be necessary as part of a clear, concise policy statement coming from the Council. Nevertheless, the intentions of the paper are commendable. Without a clear, updated policy statement on the role of economics in teacher education, we take the risk of being bypassed by the various state and national efforts to reshape teacher education. We simply cannot afford to be placed in that kind of position.

I advised the JCEE staff that an official policy statement from the Council should contain the following basic ingredients and I think that the working draft has tried to incorporate such recommendations:

(1) Unequivocally specifying the necessity of all prospective teachers having required formal study in economics as essential to their general education and basic academic literacy in this day and age. Such required formal study would emphasize basic economic concepts, knowledge, and the analytical tools of thinking and dealing with problems. (General Education)

(2) Attention to the pedagogical treatment of concepts and knowledge in economics should be made an integral part of general methods courses for all prospective elementary school teachers. (Professional Education)

(3) Require that all prospective social studies, business education, and home economics teachers supplement the basic general education requirement specified in (1) with additional formal study in economics as part of their academic specialization. (Academic Specialization)

(4) Also require that all prospective secondary teachers in social studies, business education, and home economics education have specialized work in the pedagogical treatment of economic concepts and knowledge. (Professional Education)

(5) For those states requiring competency-knowledge examinations as a prerequisite to teacher certification, the following requirements should also be added:

(a) Such competency-knowledge examinations for all prospective elementary school teachers should contain an adequate number of items assessing a basic degree of economic literacy.

(b) Such competency-knowledge examinations for all prospective secondary school teachers should also include (a) above but in addition, all social studies, business education, and home economics teachers must have items in their subject matter of preparation exam assessing reasonable depth in economics.

We need to move quickly on refining a Council policy statement, and I am pleased that the Council is giving the matter significant attention.

****